

Memorial To The Victims
Of The Disaster Of
The U.S. Battleship
"Maine"
Key West Cemetery near
Margaret Street entrance
Key West
Monroe County
Florida

HABS No. FL-191

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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. FLA-191

MEMORIAL TO THE VICTIMS OF THE DISASTER
OF THE U.S. BATTLESHIP 'MAINE'

Location: Key West Cemetery near Margaret Street entrance,
Key West, Monroe County, Florida.

USGS Key West Quadrangle, Universal Transverse
Mercator Coordinates: 17.419380.2715820.

PART I HISTORICAL INFORMATION

The memorial was erected in 1898 by the Encampment Union Veteran Legion, Washington, District of Columbia, and by the citizens of Key West. It commemorates the men who died when the Battleship Maine blew up in Havana Harbor on February 15, 1898, the most dramatic in a series of incidents which precipitated the Spanish American War. The designer of the Memorial gate is not known. The sculptor for the statue of the sailor at the center of the Memorial is A. Pelzer.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

- A. General Statement: This memorial consists of the tombs of the victims, a sculptural centerpiece and an elaborate iron fence and gate typical of late nineteenth century design.
- B. Description of Exterior:
1. Over-all dimensions: 105' x 160' rectangular enclosure.
 2. Fence: Wrought and cast iron fence of short and long iron rod palings with spear tip finials, wrought iron volutes; rod posts with a battle axe finial; gate posts consist of four square rods twisted at two points, ties with USN disc inserts, cast iron floriated finials; wrought iron gates have decorated panels embosed with capstans, anchors and floral swags, crossed sabres, and an eagle with wings spread perched on a shield surrounded with flags, cannon, anchor and cannon balls. Identification panels bear the following raised lettering:
 - (a) Erected under the auspices of Encampment Union Veteran Legion, Washington District of Columbia by Popular Subscription November 1898.
 - (b) Committee Chairman, Gideon A. Lyon; Morris J. Foote; Luke Kelly; William M. Brown; Frank A. Butts, Secretary & Treasurer.

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3. Concrete pedestal, bronze plaque identifying grave locations.
 4. Metal flag pole.
 5. Centerpiece: Granite pedestal on concrete base, bas relief "In memory of the victims of the disaster of U.S. Battle-Ship 'Maine' in Havana harbor, Feb. 15, 1898. Erected by citizens of Key West." Sculpture of sailor gazing into the distance and holding an oar. A plaque at the base is lettered "Manufactured by W.H. Mullens, Salem, Ohio. A. Pelzer, Sculptor." The sculpture appears to be of bronze covered with "bronze" paint.
 6. Cement walks are inlaid with anchor and star motif painted blue.
- C. Site: Located near the Margaret Street entrance to the Key West Cemetery. Family plots are to the rear and right of the memorial, with roadways at the front and left.

Prepared by F. Blair Reeves, AIA
Supervisory Architect
Key West Project 1967
September 1967

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

These records were prepared in 1967 during a summer project jointly sponsored by the Old Island Restoration Foundation, Inc. of Key West, and the Historic American Buildings Survey. Twenty-two structures were recorded, ranging from commercial structures, residences and hospitals to a convent, a lighthouse, and the Memorial to the Victims of the Disaster of the U.S. Battleship Maine.

The project was under the direction of F. Blair Reeves, AIA, Associate Professor, Department of Architecture, University of Florida. Measured drawings were prepared by student architects John D. Davenport and John F. Grimm of Texas A. and M. University, and John O. Crosby of the University of Florida. Mrs. Betty M. Bruce of the Old Island Restoration Foundation, Inc., and Professor Reeves were responsible for the historical and architectural data. They were assisted by members of the Foundation. J. Franks Brooks, Photographer, of Key West, supplied the photographs.